

S U O M I



F I N L A N D

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Annual open debate on Women, Peace and Security (SCR 1325)
UNITED NATIONS

Statement on behalf of Finland

H. E. Under-Secretary of State Ms. Marjatta Rasi

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(check against delivery)

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Mr. President,

First of all let me thank the Secretary General for his recent report on women, peace and security. As the report demonstrates, progress has been made in a number of fields in implementing the UNSC resolution 1325. Yet, as we all know, a lot of work still remains to be done in order to overcome institutional and organisational challenges and gaps. These challenges have been identified accurately in the 2008-2009 System-wide Action Plan.

Mr. President,

Finland has for more than 50 years participated in peace keeping operations. Finland has also a long history of advancing women's rights, both nationally and internationally. During the Finnish EU Presidency in 2006, the Council of the European Union decided that gender aspects will be incorporated in all activities of the European Security and Defence Policy. To facilitate this task, all EU Member States developed a checklist on mainstreaming gender into the European Security and Defence Policy. The adoption of these two instruments was an important step in the implementation of resolution 1325.

Finland is now in the process of drafting a national Action Plan for the implementation of 1325. We, in close cooperation with civil society, are committed to doing our part to ensure that women's full potential is utilised in the work for better security. The Action Plan will pay special attention to the development of a gender perspective for national capabilities. The fact that UN peace keeping missions and crisis management operations of the EU and other regional organisation are dependent on national capabilities, means that it is crucial that a gender perspective is integrated into the training of national forces and civilian personnel. We will also pay attention to women's recruitment for crisis management operations. We should not underestimate the power of example in crisis areas. Attention will also be paid to women's and girls' rights and protection. Finland will also consider setting up a pool of experts trained in gender issues.

Mr President,

Let me also highlight the need for increased attention to facilitating women's equal and active participation from conflict prevention to peace negotiations through reconstruction and political participation. As providers, professionals, mothers and spouses, women feel the impact of conflicts more strongly and often understand better the different dimensions of conflict. Without women's involvement there will be no sustainable peace - and we may risk losing the support and respect of the majority of the population.

We, the international community, are in a key position to promote gender-balanced participation by all parties. In this context, I would like to refer to the important

work towards a just and sustainable peace undertaken by the International Women's Commission, founded by a group of Palestinian and Israeli women leaders and UNIFEM. The President of Finland, Tarja Halonen, is one of the honorary co-chairs of the Commission. The IWC has stressed the importance of involving women in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians and works for the inclusion of gender equality and a gender perspective into the attempts to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the same vein, also other locally initiated dialogues, such as the face-to-face meetings of Kosovo Women's network and Serbia's Women in Black should be recognised and encouraged.

Finally, Mr. President,

I would like to ensure you of Finland's commitment to close cooperation with you and Members of the UN in the implementation of the 2008-2009 System-wide Action Plan.

Thank you.